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Cuba: The Revolution Matures

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No. 0090/75

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Intelligence Memorandum

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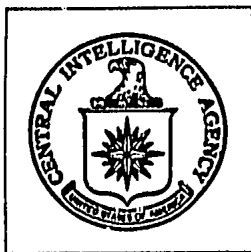
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April 15, 1975

Cuba: The Revolution Matures**Summary**

The 16-year-old Castro regime has entered a new and significant level of political development characterized by growing Soviet influence, the rejection of the utopian schemes that once overburdened the economy, a more pragmatic attitude in domestic and foreign policy, the reorganization of virtually the entire ruling structure, and movement toward joint—as opposed to individual—leadership. The revolution has matured in no small part because of the emergence as Castro's chief advisers of a small faction of pre-revolutionary communists who have displaced some of the "Fidelistas"—an elite made up mainly of Fidel and Raul Castro's comrades-in-arms from the guerrilla warfare days of 1957-58.

At the end of the last decade, Castro was at last persuaded of the need for a change in direction by a number of factors:

- His administration had reached the nadir of its popularity.
- He faced Soviet pressure, isolation in the international arena, and economic bankruptcy.
- His problems were peaking at the very time his political maneuverability had neared its lower limits.

Alienation of the US and heavy dependence on massive external assistance had left him little alternative but to submit to the "advice" of the USSR and of those in Cuba who most closely reflected Soviet points of view. This "advice," the acceptance of which was presumably a condition of continued high levels of Soviet aid, included an insistence that Castro put his house in order so that the aid would not be wasted. He immediately set about doing so despite the realization that such institutional mechanisms as national elections, a constitution, and a party congress will build some checks and balances into the system that he has completely dominated.

At the regime's uppermost level, members of the two main political factions have differing opinions on a broad range of matters. Despite this divergence, however, the only significant minority in the leadership—the "old" communist faction—is now being permitted a major role in shaping policy. This minority can be

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expected to try to capitalize on this belated recognition of its skills by solidifying its gains and expanding its influence even further. The institutionalization process appears to be the embodiment of that effort.

There is no reason to believe, however, that Castro is losing control or that a power struggle is in the making. He is aware that basic changes in his flamboyant style of rule are required, and he is willing to accept them as long as they do not threaten his real sources of power—his control of the military and security forces, and his magnetic hold on the Cuban masses.

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Factions Within the Leadership

The Cuban leadership today is made up primarily of the guerrilla faction of the defunct July 26 Movement, the more flexible members of the "old" or pre-Castro communist party (the Popular Socialist Party), and a smattering of technicians and opportunists—some of whom had their origins in the pre-Castro Student Revolutionary Directorate—who are basically loyal to Fidel. Castro's guerrilla faction, which includes in its ranks a number of professional military officers jailed in the mid-1950s for anti-Batista activities, has the backing of the armed forces and security service. It is the strongest in terms of naked power and also has the greatest representation on the party Central Committee and other organizations. It is this strength that for more than a decade gave Fidel the clear authority to indulge his penchant for making most decisions himself.

In the wake of the political and economic problems arising from the attempt to produce ten million tons of sugar in the 1970 harvest, however, Castro realized the need for a fundamental change in his style of governing. For lack of alternatives, he turned to "old" communists such as Carlos Rafael Rodriguez and Blas Roca, whose advice he had spurned for so long but whose credibility with Cuba's Soviet patrons was of supreme importance. Since 1970, therefore, the "old" communist faction, because of its affiliation with Moscow and the superior organizational skills of its members, has gained influence out of all proportion to its representation in the top offices of the party. None of its members, for instance, holds a seat in the Political Bureau.

Moreover, the successes of the policies developed since 1970 for the Castro regime by Rodriguez and Roca (in close cooperation with Moscow) stand out in vivid contrast to the failures of the policies of the pre-1970 era, when the guerrilla elite rubber-stamped Fidel's decisions. Steady economic improvement has strengthened the ascendancy of what is in fact, a minority faction in the leadership. Thus, the guerrilla elite maintains its grasp on the power structure, while the weaker "old" communist faction is pre-eminent in the policy-making field.

The key to this paradoxical relationship is Castro. As long as he sees no threat to his own position in using the "old" communists as a source of technical and administrative skills, the "Fidelistas" will accept his judgment and permit the paradox to continue. Neither the fanatical anti-communists of the July 26 Movement nor the die-hard anti-Fidelistas of the original communist party are around to fan the flames of friction, and both elements of the regime's leadership now find it convenient to stress their similarities rather than their differences.

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Fidel CASTRO—First Secretary
Raul CASTRO—Second Secretary

Oswaldo Dorticos
Juan Almela

Sergio del Valle
Guillermo Garcia

Ramiro Valdes
Armando Hart

SECRETARIAT

Fidel CASTRO—Chairman
Raul CASTRO—Deputy Chairman

Oswaldo DORTICOS
Antonio PEREZ
Jorge RISQUET

Carlos Rafael RODRIGUEZ
Isidoro MALMERCA
Raul GARCIA

Bias ROCA
Pedro MIRET
Faure CHOMON

Jose ABRANTES
Rogelio ACEVEDO
Armando ACOSTA
Severo AGUIRRE
Juan ALMEIDA
Jose M. ALVAREZ
Emilio ARAGONES
Jose ARTEAGA
Flavio BRAVO
Julio E. CAMACHO
Lino CARRERAS
Ernesto CASILLAS
Belarmino CASTILLA
Fidel CASTRO
Raul CASTRO
Angel Joel CHAVECO
Faure CHOMON
Osmani CIENFUEGOS
Leopoldo CINTRAS
Abelardo COLOME
Raul CURBELO
Sergio DEL VALLE
Manuel DIAZ

Joel DOMENECH
Oswaldo DORTICOS
Victor E. DREKE
Vilma ESPIN
Manuel E. FAJARDO
Marcelo FERNANDEZ
Oscar FERNANDEZ
Harold FERRER
Callixto GARCIA
Guillermo GARCIA
Julio A. GARCIA
Pedro M. GARCIA
Raul GARCIA
Elena GIL
Fablo GROBART
Orestes GUERRA
Raul GUERRA
Secundino GUERRA
Armando HART
Joel IGLESIAS
Omar H. ISER
Rienerio JIMENEZ
Rolando KINDELAN

Jose LLANUSA
Antonio E. LUSSON
Manuel LUZARDO
Jose R. MACHADO
Isidoro MALMERCA
Juan MARINELLO
Miguel MARTIN
Joaquin MENDEZ
Raul MENDENDEZ
Arnaldo MILIAN
Carlos MIR
Pedro MIRET
Jesus MONTANE
Jose NARANJO
Arnaldo OCHOA
Mario OLIVA
Filiberto OLIVERA
Ramon PARDO
Antonio PEREZ
Faustino PEREZ
Walfredo PEREZ
Manuel PINEIRO
Lizardo PROENZA

Jose RAMIREZ
Jorge RISQUET
Raul ROA
Bias ROCA
Carlos Rafael RODRIGUEZ
Orlando RODRIGUEZ
Basilio RODRIGUEZ
Ursinio ROJAS
Celia SANCHEZ
Aldo SANTAMARIA
Haydee SANTAMARIA
Rene de los SANTOS
Clementina SERRA
Jose R. SILVA
Lionel SOTO
Julio TARRAU
Diocles TORRALBA
Felipe TORRES
Ramiro VALDES
Anibal VELAZ
Roberto VIERA
Luis A. ZAYAS

Military Department

American Department

Afro-Asian Department

Revolutionary Orientation Department

Internal Education Department

Construction Department

Transportation and Communication
Department

General Foreign Relations Department

Education, Science, Culture Department

Juridical and State Organisms Department

Organization Department

Agriculture and Livestock Department

Heavy Industries Department

Sugar Department

Economy Department

Consumption and Services Department

Mass Organizations Department

Central Organizations Service Department

SIX PROVINCIAL COMMITTEES

PINAR DEL RIO—Julio E. CAMACHO
HAVANA—Jose R. MACHADO
MATANZAS—Julian RIZO

LAS VILLAS—Arnaldo MILIAN
CAMAGUEY—Raul CURBELO
ORIENTE—Armando HART

59 REGIONAL COMMITTEES**416 MUNICIPAL AND SECTIONAL COMMITTEES****16,000 BASE COMMITTEES****180,000-200,000 MEMBERS**

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The goals of the two factions coincide, at least in the short term, and the guerrilla faction realizes that the present symbiosis is contributing much more to the achievement of these goals than did the pre-1970 relationship. In short, the policies of the communists of the pre-revolutionary era are providing the regime with a much more stable economic and organizational base, and, as long as no attempt is made to weaken Castro's position, the guerrilla faction will continue cooperating and will cede responsibility for a broad range of decision-making.

Should Castro decide, however, that the "old" communists are mounting a challenge to his overall leadership, neither he nor the guerrilla elite would allow the situation to continue. In such an event, even the combination of his need for their expertise, Moscow's certain displeasure, and the threat to continued economic stability would not be sufficient to deter him from attempting to reverse the trend, by force if necessary. Much would depend on the nature of the threat. Anything approaching "a clear and present danger" to his control of the military, for example, would obviously provoke swift remedial action. A gradual process, in which the erosion of his power is almost imperceptible, would be more difficult for him to handle. He would be likely to allow the process to simmer, depending heavily on his proven ability to outmaneuver his opponents through political stratagems, and would resort to armed force only if all else fails.

Castro's ability to command the continued loyalty of the armed forces and the security service stems from placing members of the guerrilla elite in all key positions in the chains of command. No "old" communist, for example, has held a strategic position in the military structure since 1964. Moreover, both Fidel and Armed Forces Minister Raul Castro, Cuba's undisputed number-two man, have made a point of identifying themselves with the new class of professional officers who are too young to have participated in the war against Batista but in whose hands the control of important military units will eventually lie. The Castros' hold on the nation's armed might, therefore, seems secure should a showdown develop.

For the most part, the guerrilla elite continues to look with suspicion on the "old" communists, a suspicion dating to the late 1950s. With the exception of one small communist guerrilla unit whose members took to the hills of their own volition in mid-1958 to avoid piecemeal liquidation at the hands of the local police, the communists avoided the path taken by Castro's insurgent forces until it became clear in late 1958 that the guerrillas had Batista on the defensive. The guerrillas—especially Raul Castro—did maintain some contact with the Communist Party, but if communists joined guerrilla ranks it was usually because of personal conviction rather than as a result of

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party orders. At times, the party even acted in a manner detrimental to the guerrillas' success and publicly ridiculed guerrilla warfare on theoretical grounds as an inappropriate way to achieve power. This history, plus the communists' links with Moscow as opposed to the guerrillas' intense nationalism, constitutes the basis for the gap separating the two groups.

Areas of Potential Friction

Cuba's relationships with Moscow and with the US are two key points where friction could undermine the present cooperation in the leadership. The guerrilla elite, for example, prefers to be as independent of Moscow as of Washington. It has endured Cuba's drift deep into the Soviet orbit only because of economic realities and because it fears Soviet patronage less than it fears US military intervention. Cuba's proximity to the US, the concept of super powers' spheres of influence, and past US interventions in the Caribbean have shaped the thinking of the faction's leaders to a degree approaching paranoia.

The entire adult life of most of these relatively young and impressionable officials has been spent in the shadow of what they see as aggressive US military, paramilitary, and economic action. Experience has led them to believe that the US has always been hostile. To a large extent, their view of the US is governed by the support Washington provided to Batista during the guerrillas' campaign, by its participation in the Bay of Pigs invasion, and by its subsequent efforts to bring down the revolution by diplomatic and economic means.

As a result, they have dragged their feet on the policy of detente with Washington urged by Moscow and the "old" communists. Despite the greatly increased influence of the minority faction since 1970, it was not until Leonid Brezhnev's visit to Cuba in January-February 1974 that the Castro regime ventured beyond mere lip service to detente. The 1962 missile crisis taught the guerrilla elite that Cuba is not vital to Soviet interests and that the Castro regime, in Soviet eyes, is expendable in the crunch of Big Power politics. In finally agreeing to pursue detente, Havana is gambling that eventual access to US trade and technology outweighs the risks involved in drawing closer to a government that, in the elite's opinion, has so far offered only unrelenting hostility.

Detente also offers a chance to develop a counterbalance to Soviet pressure—an option that has been absent from Castro's political arsenal for some time. If possible, Castro would like to shift his economic reliance to a less demanding benefactor. His guarded but persistent criticism of the failure of the oil-producing countries to assist developing nations suggests that he

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would prefer straight economic ties with a rich oil producer to Cuba's complex relationship with the USSR. But the next best alternative is to play one super power against the other in an effort to achieve as much independence as possible.

Attempting to develop a balance between super powers, of course, would also entail a continuation of warm ties with Moscow, an arrangement the guerrilla elite would continue to suffer. The members of the elite may detest the almost overwhelming Soviet influence in Cuba's internal affairs, but at the same time they realize that, short of all-out war, the USSR is Cuba's best insurance against the US. Until they are convinced that the US is no longer a threat, they will look to Moscow for military backing no matter what their relationships are in the economic sphere.

The "old" communists, on the other hand, look for an ever closer association with Moscow and view detente as an extension of Soviet policy that will allow other countries to bear some of the onerous economic burden that Cuba has become for the USSR. The willingness of the members of the Rodriguez-Roca group to urge detente on Castro suggests that they, and Moscow as well, are extremely confident in the security of their position and expect to continue exerting a major influence on Cuban policy. The minority faction will attempt to use the institutionalization process to increase its representation in the regime's leadership to the point where Castro's acquiescence is no longer needed to guarantee the acceptance of its policies. The "old" communists know well his mercurial nature, however, and realize how easily he can turn against them. They have not forgotten the purges in 1962 and 1968, and they are aware of how vulnerable they are as a minority without a true power base.

This does not mean that there is anything resembling a power struggle in Havana today, or that the "old" communists want Castro replaced in the near term. For one, he is much too valuable to them as a head of government who still enjoys unparalleled popularity with the masses. Moreover, he has shown that cooperation between the "old" communists and the guerrilla faction is not only possible but is mutually rewarding, and that there are circumstances in which he will allow the "old" communists unprecedented authority and responsibility.

Other Areas of Divergence

The "old" communists would vigorously reject any attempt by Castro to resurrect the exportation of revolution except in those specific times and places where it might parallel Soviet policy. They look upon the Cuban guerrilla experience as a case in which fortuitous circumstances allowed a

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group of armed rebels to win out for all the wrong reasons. Some of the ex-guerrillas, on the other hand, still look upon direct action as the most efficient means of achieving their goals and have little time for esoteric theory. But the success of the present diplomatic approach in the very arena where the violent approach failed seems to have convinced them that indiscriminate violence is generally counterproductive as a foreign policy tool.

The majority of the guerrilla elite also seems to have been convinced that the domestic policies of the "Guevaraists"—those among their number who championed the naive economic and ideological concepts of Che Guevara—were unsound, given Cuba's rudimentary stage of socialist political development. Thus, the earlier stress on moral incentives and calls for the elimination of the use of money have fallen victim to the less colorful but more realistic theories of the "old" communists, who gauged much more accurately the degree of political consciousness—and, thus, the motivational susceptibility—of the Cuban people.

A more sensitive area of disagreement involves Cuba's relations with the Communist parties of Latin America. Here, too, the guerrilla elite has drawn back from its radical position of hostility and now accepts the "old" communists' desire to repair interparty relations in the hemisphere. The restoration of ties is probably largely cosmetic, however, at least insofar as the guerrilla faction is concerned. The failure of the Bolivian Communist Party to support the Che Guevara operation in 1967, the abandonment of the guerrilla struggle by the Venezuelan Communist Party earlier in the same decade, and similar if less spectacular examples of alleged party perfidy elsewhere in the hemisphere have left a residue of ill will that Castro and his coterie are not about to sweep under the rug, no matter what steps may be taken over the short term to achieve mutual tactical advantage.

For their part, the Latin American communists seem well disposed to maintain the cordial relations—particularly with Cuba's "old" communists—that have been built up with Havana over the last six years. They are unlikely, however, to forget, or forgive, Castro's bitter public denunciations of them for allegedly abandoning their political ideals in exchange for personal comfort, and of confining their political activity to such safe areas as pamphleteering and armchair criticism of those who chose the path of action. Modest interparty cooperation is likely to continue, but the relationship is a brittle one that cannot be subjected to much strain. Aware of the bitterness the guerrilla faction has had to master for the sake of unity in the leadership, the "old" communists will be careful to avoid situations or activities that might rekindle old antagonisms and lead to intraparty, as well as interparty, friction.

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One key area in which the "old" communists have successfully overcome much of the guerrilla faction's doubt and suspicion concerns the need for revamping the regime's organizational framework. Until 1970, the guerrilla faction could see no need for change because it was already in total control. The political and economic problems that peaked in 1970, however, convinced it that there were indeed serious shortcomings that required remedial measures of a fundamental nature. As a result, the changes in the structure and functioning of Cuba's governing apparatus over the past four years have been dramatic.

The process of accelerated institutionalization began in late 1970 when Castro ordered a shake-up of Cuba's mass organizations, allegedly to make them more a reflection of the people's will. This "democratization" consisted primarily of the election of each organization's officials, ostensibly by its rank and file, but was also accompanied by varying degrees of organizational restructuring. Most attention was devoted to refurbishing the Central Organization of Cuban Workers, the mass organization most directly connected with economic productivity. Nevertheless, when the process was completed, there were relatively few new faces in the hierarchies of the mass organizations, and the frenzy of reshuffling seemed to have had minimal political impact.

At the same time, however, a sweeping reorganization of the entire governmental structure was undertaken, using the USSR as a model. The process culminated in the formal presentation of the new administrative apparatus to the public in November 1972. An executive committee was created within the Council of Ministers to divide the government into separate functional sectors, each headed by a deputy prime minister. Fidel, as prime minister, chairs the committee with Raul as his first deputy. President Osvaldo Dorticos, who appears to be its third-ranking member, and seven sector chiefs form the remainder of the ten-man body. This committee, working through the Council of Ministers, is responsible for managing all government entities and all aspects of the national economy. Technically, no government body operates outside its control, but in fact the interior and armed forces ministries fall directly under the prime minister, rather than any of the sector chiefs, and Fidel therefore retains direct control over what continues to be the principal bulwark of his power.

The reorganization of the government constitutes a major structural improvement. In contrast to the previous organizational farrago, with its burgeoning bureaucracy and autonomous agencies accountable only to Fidel, the new structure provides for a clear-cut chain of command, delegation of authority, the pinpointing of responsibility, and other prerequisites of

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CUBAN LEADERSHIP

PARTY		GOVERNMENT		
POLITICAL BUREAU	SECRETARIAT	EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS	COUNCIL OF MINISTERS	NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
Fidel CASTRO (First Secretary)	Fidel CASTRO (Chairman)	Fidel CASTRO (Prime Minister)	Fidel CASTRO (Minister-President of National Agrarian Reform Institute)	TO BE ELECTED IN 1976
Raul CASTRO (Second Secretary)	Raul CASTRO (Deputy Chairman)	Raul CASTRO (First Deputy Prime Minister)	Raul CASTRO (Minister of Revolutionary Armed Forces)	
Oswaldo DORTICOS	Oswaldo DORTICOS	Oswaldo DORTICOS (President of the Republic)	Oswaldo DORTICOS (Minister-President of Central Planning Board)	
Sergio DEL VALLE			Sergio DEL VALLE (Interior Minister)	
Ramiro VALDES		Ramiro VALDES (Deputy Prime Minister for Construction)		
Juan ALMEIDA (Delegate in Oriente Province)				
Amando HART (Party first secretary in Oriente Province)				
Guillermo GARCIA		Guillermo GARCIA (Deputy Prime Minister for Transportation and Communication)	Carlos Rafael RODRIGUEZ (Deputy Prime Minister for Foreign Affairs)	
Carlos Rafael RODRIGUEZ		Carlos Rafael RODRIGUEZ (Minister for Economic and Scientific-Technical Cooperation)		
Blas ROCA (law, elections)				
Pedro MIRET (heavy industry)				
Faure CHOMON				
Isidoro MALMERCA				
Antonio PEREZ (ideology)				
Jorge RISQUET (agriculture, livestock)				
Raul GARCIA PELAEZ				
There are 25 additional posts on the Council of Ministers carrying the rank of Minister.				
Diodes TORRALBA (Deputy Prime Minister for Sugar Industry)				
Belarmino CASTILLA (Deputy Prime Minister for Education, Science, Culture)				
Flavio BRAVO (Deputy Prime Minister for Consumption and Services)				
Joel DOMENECH (Deputy Prime Minister for Basic Industry)				

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improved administration and efficient management. The "old" communists now have three of the ten seats on the executive committee, with responsibility for consumption and services, basic industries, and foreign relations. Another "old" communist holds the only advisory post on the committee.

Because initial attention had been focused on remodeling the government and the mass organizations, the restructuring of the party during the early stages was agonizingly slow and was accompanied by considerable confusion. Prior to 1973, for example, party "revitalization" consisted mainly of a drive to increase membership—particularly among industrial workers—and the creation of new advisory commissions attached to the Central Committee and responsible for party-government liaison. By early 1973, however, it was clear that a major effort was in progress to reshape the party along Soviet lines. In January, the party commissions began appearing as departments, and in February, the expansion of the Secretariat from six to ten members (one more was added later) indicated that long-dormant body was to assume increased importance.

The Secretariat and the Central Committee's six original commissions (education; labor; armed forces and state security; economy; constitutional studies; and foreign affairs) had existed for the most part only on paper. They did not meet formally and had no discernible impact on the decision-making process. In fact, the Central Committee itself apparently met only on the few rare occasions when Fidel wanted to project the appearance of a unified leadership, as during the purge of the conservative wing of the "old" communists in January 1968. The activation of the departments and the resurrection and expansion of the Secretariat, therefore, were significant indications that the party was to become less a conduit for Fidel's decisions and more a forum for analyzing problems and developing solutions. This has proved to be true.

As the party now operates, the Secretariat has far more authority in interpreting the decisions of the Political Bureau and is the primary channel for transmitting those decisions from the Central Committee to the government. The Secretariat also has a corresponding responsibility to monitor the government's performance and to keep the Central Committee informed of progress and problems. In both cases, all but three of the more than 20 new Central Committee departments are the Secretariat's main channels of communication. Each of the 11 Secretariat members appears to have one or more departments under his jurisdiction. The Secretariat's increased influence is reflected in its greater workload; it now meets weekly.

Although the departments play a key role in day-to-day party business, they function in a staff capacity and are not themselves policy-making groups. Three, the military, African-Asian, and Latin American departments,

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are headed by Central Committee members, and appear to be subordinate to the Political Bureau rather than the Secretariat. Thus, the guerrilla elite retains for itself control over the military establishment and over special operations in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. The Secretariat's department heads are lesser party functionaries.

"Old" communists occupy three of the eleven Secretariat positions. Of the remainder, one is held by a former member of the Revolutionary Directorate and six by veterans of the guerrilla faction. President Dorticos, who is generally considered a Fidelista, also is a member. Prior to the Secretariat's expansion, "old" communists had one third of its six seats. Statistically, therefore, they lost ground as a result of the expansion, but in reality they gained both in influence and in impact on policy because of the Secretariat's greatly enhanced role.

Looking Ahead

The Party Congress

One of the most important facets of the institutionalization process will be the first party congress, now scheduled for late 1975. Its delegates will elect a new Central Committee (which in turn will elect a new Political Bureau and Secretariat), establish the ground rules for national elections to be held in 1976, and produce a constitution suitable for ratification through a popular referendum next year.

Castro presumably will try to go to the congress with most of the delegates in his hip pocket, and there is nothing at this stage that indicates he will be unable to do so. In that event, the voting will hold no surprises for him, and a continuation of the trend in effect since 1970 can be expected.

Nevertheless, the "old" communists stand to improve their relative position either through an increase in their representation on the Central Committee or through a reduction in the size of the Central Committee without a corresponding reduction of their contingent. Moreover, at least one of their number is likely to be placed on the Political Bureau and one or two others may be added to the Secretariat. While significant, these changes will merely formalize the greater role the "old" communists have played since 1970 and will be achieved with Fidel's full acquiescence, partly as a sop to Moscow and partly in recognition of the political facts of life.

Technical experts and others with no pre-revolutionary political antecedents are also almost certain to score gains in the Central Committee at the congress. With only scant representation now, they have nowhere to go but up. They are shouldering more and more of the regime's burdens, and their

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expertise can hardly be disregarded in selecting the membership of the nation's most important policy-setting body. The experts' more pragmatic approach to problem-solving gives them more in common with the "old" communists than with the guerrilla faction, and they therefore would probably be susceptible to political manipulation should the "old" communists need allies in selling their programs. It is unlikely that the technicians gains at the congress will be substantial enough, even in coalition with the "old" communists, to constitute a majority in the new Central Committee. Nevertheless, they are a new and rapidly growing faction whose views are going to get more consideration from both the ex-guerrillas and the "old" communists as time goes on.

The Constitution

In addition to lining up his delegates for the party congress, Castro is now carefully weighing the draft constitution that is under consideration. He had been avoiding a constitution for the same reason he had been avoiding a party congress—both have the potential of limiting his authority. But the difficult situation in which Castro found himself in 1970 finally forced him to concede to the "old" communists on both points.

The regime now functions on the basis of the Fundamental Law of February 7, 1959, a provisional legal document derived in very broad terms from the Cuban Constitution of 1940. Last fall, however, a party-government commission headed by Blas Roca was charged with producing the draft of a new document. The draft "socialist" constitution was presented on February 24, 1975 to the Political Bureau and the Council of Ministers, which are to "examine its general outlines" prior to its public release. The draft will be promoted publicly through the mass organizations from April 10 to September 16, before being "analyzed" by the party congress. The draft that emerges from the congress will then be ratified by popular referendum in 1976.

This method of approving the constitution appears to guarantee that Castro will not be caught short by the document that will define, and thereby limit, his power. If the draft is not to Fidel's liking, he will change it during its review by the Political Bureau and the Council of Ministers. Later, if the congress were to attempt to make unpalatable changes, he could denounce them as being contrary to the will of the people as expressed in the discussions held by the mass organizations. Such a draft, were the congress then to persist in the changes, would have little chance of ratification in the public referendum.

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Elections

Another institutional device is the process of elections to be held throughout Cuba at all levels of government next year. It has already been leaked—significantly, perhaps, by an “old” communist—that Fidel will step down as prime minister and leave his fate to the electorate to decide. He may even decide not to run but to confine himself to his party duties, freeing himself from much of the bureaucratic strain associated with the day-to-day conduct of government business. This would have the advantage of removing him from the line of fire when the government comes in for criticism, but we doubt he will go so far as to bow out.

Outlook

Castro and his guerrilla faction will most likely try to assure that the revolution proceeds without significant deviation from the course it has been following since 1970. In the absence of a substitute patron in the wings, Fidel will assiduously avoid any redirection that might alienate the USSR, even though this may cause him ultimately to lose some ground in the regime leadership. The party congress will be held, the “old” communists will enhance their position through greater representation on the party’s governing organizations, and the technicians, too, will register gains. A constitution, suitably worded to protect Fidel’s supremacy, will be adopted, and elections will be held that will grant Fidel a respectability that will have as much impact abroad as at home.

Castro will find, however, that his reconditioned party is much more formal in its operations and therefore less flexible in responding to the type of demands he made of it prior to 1970. Both the Central Committee and the Secretariat will play much more active roles in the decision-making process, and dissenting voices will be heard more frequently, even in the previously sacrosanct Political Bureau. The Central Committee will move decidedly closer to its theoretical description—it allegedly is the highest permanent decision-making element in the party—and its augmented importance will be gained at the expense of the Political Bureau and of Fidel himself. Just how far this movement toward joint leadership may go, however, cannot be determined until the composition of the new Central Committee is known.

In the same fashion, Castro will find the government bureaucracy less dependent on him and therefore less prone to wasting precious resources on quixotic schemes that have not been integrated into the national development plan. In turn, as the trend toward intensive planning increases, Castro will find himself more and more dependent on the rapidly growing new class

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of technical experts, many of whom will undoubtedly replace members of the guerrilla elite in those positions where economic, administrative, and scientific expertise provide greater returns than does political reliability. The technicians will probably find cooperation with the "old" communists much easier than cooperation with the less sophisticated guerrilla elite, and as the aging "old" communist faction dwindles with the passage of time, the experts will replace it as a moderating force in the leadership.

As institutionalization increases, so does the probability that there will be a peaceful transition of power when Fidel eventually disappears from the scene. Although heir-designate Raul Castro has the solid backing of the armed forces, no one in the leadership has a broad base of popular support and an attempt to contest Raul's elevation could easily lead to bloodshed. Violence is a possibility in any event, but the strengthening of national institutions provides Raul with a better means of maintaining control and at the same time establishes channels through which those who might oppose his advancement can argue their case without resorting to violence.

As for the impact of these domestic events on Cuba's relations with the US and the USSR, the emergence of the Moscow-oriented minority bodes well for such issues as detente. Previously, the voices that had urged consideration of some type of reconciliation with the US had been smothered by the nationalism of the guerrilla elite. Now, however, there is a political force with significant influence at the uppermost level in the Castro regime that can be used—should the US choose to negotiate with Havana—to bring pressure on Fidel as long as this does not conflict with Soviet goals. If such talks materialize, Rodriguez and Roca, with their improved status, are in a better position to counter, or at least moderate, the negative influence of Castro's advisers among the guerrilla elite. Although the "old" communists would not act in a manner that they believe is contrary to Cuba's best interests, they could be expected to argue for detente, and to invoke the name of Brezhnev to bolster their argument.

The paradox of a nationalistic majority acceding in the field of policy formulation to a minority clearly tied to a foreign power points to a weakness in the Cuban leadership. If, in bilateral negotiations with Havana, the "old" communists can be used to edge Fidel toward detente, so too can the nationalism of the majority be used against the "old" communists on other issues. This vulnerability, limited though it may be, did not exist prior to the emergence of the minority faction; until then, the leadership consisted largely of a closely knit, single-minded team of loyal Fidelistas content to follow Castro blindly.

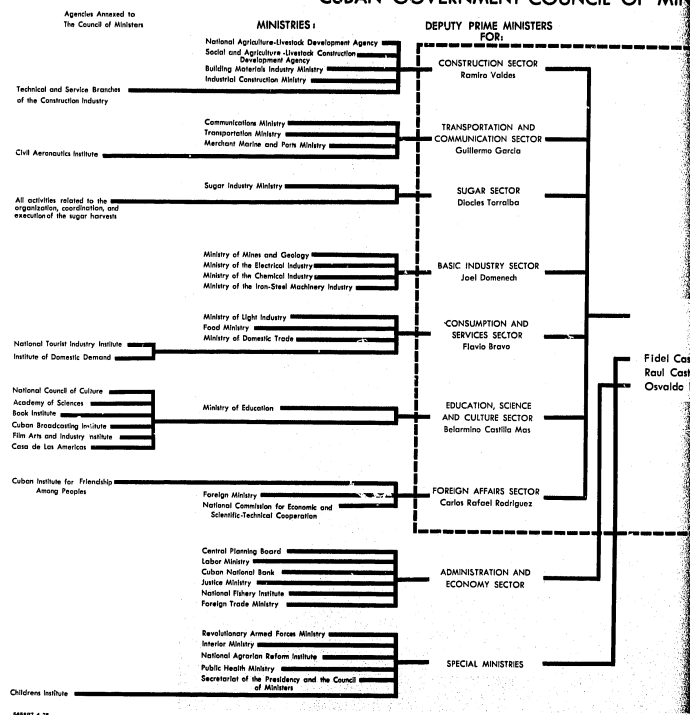
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On the other hand, the identity of the short-term goals of the two factions and the increasing flexibility demonstrated by the guerrilla elite over the past five years are definite pluses toward the regime's continued stability. The leadership has matured considerably and today is better able to withstand political stresses that in earlier years would have weakened it seriously. There is nothing in the immediate future that would appear to threaten the continuation of that trend.

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